

THE WAVE'S DEATH.

It is a dream of some sweet unknown land,
That thrills the trembling wave far out at sea!
What strange, with longing draws me to the strand,
The eager waters to an unknown land?
Unhindered by the tempest's mighty hand,
From here of sunny seas and soft winds free,
They hurry on in passionate ecstasy,
And, breaking, die upon the faithless sand.
O, restless soul, whose every passing breath
Is full of vague desires and sweet, dim dreams,
Across the far horizon glows and gleams
The dazzling land where passion beckoneth:
Yet shalt thou find, fair as the vision seems,
Like the last wave upon the shore, but death.

—Susan Mary Spalding.

A BAGGAGE SMASHER

Between the stories of Conductor Tom Pope and Sandy McTougal, backed by Sandy McTougal's friends, one gets a pretty good idea of Sandy's remarkable adventure with a voice, or, as Sandy terms it, with the devil in a box.

Tom Pope is conductor and McTougal is baggage master on the Air line, which runs from the Atlantic ocean to "the middle of next week."

"Most astonishing thing, that hunt of Sandy's for a voice," said the conductor, the other night.

"Umph!" grunted Sandy, "that may be yer way of lookin' at it, but I call it diggin' for the devil, and findin' him."

"Are you going to tell this story?" inquired the conductor.

"Not by a long chalk," McTougal answered.

Then Tom narrates, and very prettily too, how he and Sandy were transferred to night runs in August last, and how lonely the baggage man became because he was cut off from fellows to listen to his stories and offer him cigars.

"You allers smoked 'em, Tom," interrupted Sandy. "I don't smoke, ye know."

"I did get a good many puffs that way, I'll admit," said the conductor. "They were about the only thing Sandy ever gave that I could get any light out of."

"Are you telling this story?" asked McTougal. "If so, tell it."

"Sandy was lonely and miserable," continued his friend. "Nobody talked to him or gave him a quarter for not smothering their baggage, so he took to brown studies and naps between stations. The night of his voice business—"

"Devil, I tell you," cries Sandy abruptly.

"Was a crowded one," continues Pope, without noticing the interruption. "His car was jam full of luggage."

"And the more trunks Sandy has on board the crosser he gets. There was a camp meeting on a switch-off track, and at the junction I picked up a lot of nobby passengers who were leaving for other places of amusement, and there was no end of trunks."

"McTougal got things into shape about 11 o'clock, I reckon, and as there's a part of the run where it's a good hour between stations he got ready for a snooze. He picked out the softest trunk in the pile on which to pillow his head, tilted back his chair with his feet on the rounds, pulled his hat over his face and went to sleep. How's that, Mac?"

"Quite correct," responds the baggage master.

"Very well; then you tell it for awhile. I wasn't there, you know."

"It didn't seem 's if I'd been asleep now'n a minute," begins Sandy, "when there was a lively jump of the car an I sort of come to life with a jerk. At the same time I heard, as if 'vny off, a noise like some one a-talkin'. But I thought 'twas a brakeman outside, an was jes' a-doin' off again when right at my ear, in a thin, sharp voice, sa' thin said, 'Oh, Lord!'"

"I ain't no fool, I ain't," Sandy asserts, throwin' back his head defiantly, "an when that tin whisper comes into my ear I jes' half opened my eyes 'pectin' to see some of the boys around. But not a livin' thing was visible. So I said to myself, 'I skored; that's what's the matter,' an off I goes a-snoozin' an dreamin'."

"Then agin I hears that voice. It says quite distinctly, 'I want to get out!'"

"Now, I wasn't a bit mistaken this time, I heard it. But fore I could get my wits together there was a yell soundin' 'way off."

"That's my death call," says I to myself, instantly calling to mind fellows who had heard like sounds an were dead in less'n a week. Then I says to myself, 'Sandy, don't be a fool! an jumps to my feet as wide awake as I am now."

"It was a woman's squawk, and I could have sworn to it. Then it sung out in tin trumpet style."

"Help! help!"

"I hauled over the tool chest, an the water barrel, and the cupboard in the corner, an looked out on the platforms an did everythin' a man could do under the circumstances, to find out what was a-makin' of that fuss. I went to the side door to cool myself, an was a-fannin' my face when, blame me! if I didn't hear a cornet start off with the 'Rogues' March,' and a gruff voice foller it with:—"

"In the midst of life we are in death."

"I yanked my head round, an didn't see nuthin' that wasn't there before. That threw me off my pins. Then a rooster crowed, an a feller with a cold in his nose counted ten forward and then backward, an another cuss, with a bullfrog voice, ordered me: 'Wake up! the devil wants you!' You needn't laugh, gentlemen, when I tell you I run; an so'd you if you'd been there. I was certain the devil had come for me—late but sure—an I didn't wait for him to ask for my ticket."

Tom Pope at this point broke into a stentorian laugh.

"If, gentlemen, you'd seen Sandy come flyin' into the car where I was sitting, you would never stop laughing. You may not believe it, but his brown face was as white as your shirt fronts, and his eyes were as big as billiard balls. He dashed down the aisle and whispers in my ear:—"

"Tom! Tom! Come with me!"

"What's the matter, Mac?" I said.

"What ails you?"

"Tom, the devil's in my car. He's been a-cuttin' up for half an hour, an I'm most crazy. If you're my friend come with me!"

"He wasn't drunk, because he doesn't drink. It wasn't religious enthusiasm, because Sandy had no religion. I al most believed he meant what he said, and that he had been called for. I got up in a hurry and followed him."

"I hadn't more than got inside the baggage car when from among the trunks something sung out, 'Shut that door and pull down your veil!'"

"Sandy wanted to fight, then," com-

tinued Tom. "He danced around that car like a prize fighter in the ring, until the voice cried out quite loud: 'Damnation! 'Pshaw!' I said to Sandy, 'That's a boxed up parrot!'"

"An then the parrot told you you had, asserted McTougal."

"Yes," says Tom, cheerfully.

"And then you said—do you remember what you said?"

"No, Mack; but wasn't I at your side when we got into the next coach a second later?"

"We came back with two brakemen," McTougal remarks, continuing. "One of them brakemen looked on top of the car an under it an in it. He stuck to it that there was a ventriloquist about, but gave that face up when he couldn't find nobody."

"We flung those trunks right and left in a lively style," observed Pope, "but not a thing did we discover—no human living or dead thing—not a place from which the noise came. We were puzzled, you may believe; and if the search had stopped there the road might have warehoused that coach, for no railroad man would have traveled in a car that was haunted. But the end came. While we were looking in each others' faces, and frightened in being blocked in that sort of way, the voice spoke again. It said very distinctly: 'Let me out! I am dying—dying!'"

"It was under my arm, the voice was," Sandy exclaims, "in a big trunk that had come from camp meeting. I swung out for Jake to run for a doctor, if there was one on the train, an Tom an me put that trunk on the floor as gently as if 'twas glass. 'Twas light enough. We thought the poor thing must be almost a skeleton. I got hold of the sledge-hammer. 'Keep up your courage, ma'am!' I shouted, 'an we'll have you out in a jiffy.'"

"You should have seen Sandy at that moment," says Pope enthusiastically. "He looked a hero, every inch of him. He gave that hammer four sweeping swings. Crash! crash! Rip! tear! Off came the top, and it was flung clean across the car. A pile of light, fleecy stuff followed. A dozen faces looked anxiously into that trunk, expecting to see the body of a dying or dead woman. Sandy seemed beside himself with anxiety."

"We crowded around the trunk and the doctor knelt down beside it. He pulled out a lot of rags very carefully, run his arm down on a prospecting tour, lifted up a great wad of cotton, took a good long look under it, rose to his feet and began to curse everybody and call 'em a pack of fools. Then he changed his tune and began to laugh. I asked him a little angrily what he was making such a fuss about, and if he proposed to take out the body."

"'Body! body! ha, ha, ha, ha! See here, gentlemen!' and he tossed out the cotton from the trunk, showing a funny looking machine at the bottom. 'This is Stringfellow's phonograph that he's had down to camp meeting,' the doctor said. 'He took one of Edison's concerns and rigged it up so as to go by clockwork. The shaking of the car set it in motion. It's been repeating, parrotlike, only what was told to it by the saints and sinners. Very simple, you see. I won't charge you anything for my visit, conductor. Good night,' and off he went."

"Sandy, our friends here want to know how that dream of yours over that trunk ended."

"Oh, they do—do they? Wal, gentlemen, I had to pay the cost of that trunk, an trunks cost in these times. It took a month's salary to do it, which isn't complimentary to the road. I had one lesson. If I ever want ter see a man's luggage in future I'll smash it in professional style."—E. D. M. in New York News.

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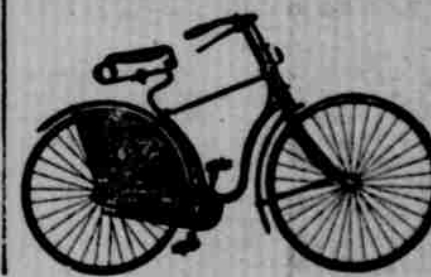
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